



**OCTOBER TIP SAVINGS: \$120-\$150/YR**  
**Avoided Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>: Up to 320 lbs./YR**

## **\$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP**

### **COMPOSTING: BREAKING IT DOWN TO THE BASICS**

*Easy steps to turn green waste into mulch*

With the arrival of the fall season, comes a new opportunity to transform your garden or lawn into something new and attractive. Placing organic mulches or compost around your plants is an easy and cost-effective way to ensure plants stay healthy, while also keeping weeds in check. Making your own organic mulch is as easy as setting up a compost bin in your backyard. After you have composted, applying mulch to plants once or twice a year can reduce plant water needs by as much as 30%, while also making safe use of waste that would otherwise end up producing greenhouse gasses in a landfill.

The composting process creates more efficient conditions for organic waste to decompose, producing nutrient rich mulch. This mulch improves soil and is extremely beneficial for plants. Kitchen scraps, yard clippings, and other organic materials are most commonly used in composting bins. Here are some tips for your composting project:

***Compost can reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides.***

#### **COMPOSTING TIPS**

1. Pick a spot to place your compost pile that is convenient for you to access and close to a water source if possible.
2. Combine 4 parts carbon-rich materials (browns) to 1 part nitrogen-rich materials (greens). Try layering different materials to speed up the process and reduce odors.  
"Browns": Sawdust, chipped branches, leaves, and straw  
"Greens": Kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, grass clippings, weed foliage, leafy trimmings
3. To aid the decomposition process, the pile needs oxygen and moisture. Turn the pile occasionally to aerate and add water to keep the materials moist but not wet.
4. Before applying to your soil, use a screen to sift out the semi-decomposed pieces if you prefer. These pieces can be returned to the compost pile to further decompose.

#### **CHECKLIST FOR SAVINGS**

- ☐ **To learn to make your own compost**, attend one of the monthly *Living Green Workshop Series* programs. Our October 9th program is ***Backyard Composting: Breaking it Down to the Basics***. For a list of all programs, visit [www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability](http://www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability) or call (480) 644-4400 for details.
- ☐ **For books on gardening and composting** at City of Mesa Library, visit <http://www.mesalibrary.org>.
- ☐ **Backyard compost containers** are available to Mesa residents for a \$5.00 refundable deposit, visit [www.mesarecycles.org](http://www.mesarecycles.org) for more information.
- ☐ **Steps to successful composting** and tips to recycling your kitchen waste can be found at [www.mesaaz.gov/waste/successful\\_composting.aspx](http://www.mesaaz.gov/waste/successful_composting.aspx).

#### **\$START \$AVING**

Start saving by composting and doing your part for *building a sustainable community*. Visit our Web site for more sustainability savings tips at [www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability](http://www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability).

*Learn to live Green*



[mesaaz.gov/sustainability](http://mesaaz.gov/sustainability)